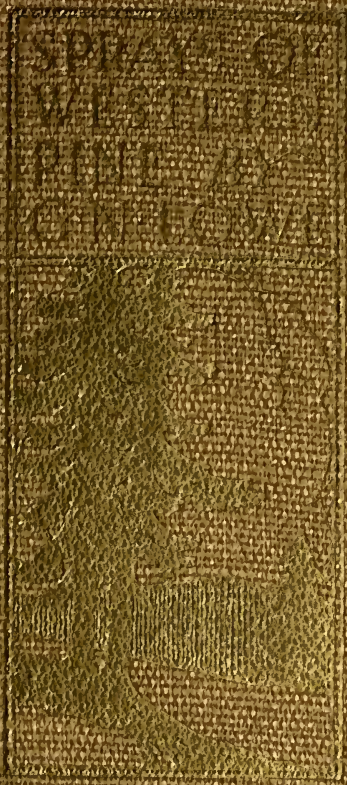

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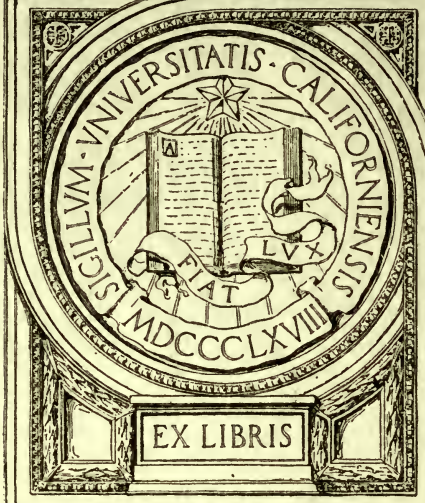

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To:-

The University of California.

With the sincere and kindly wishes of the Author —

George. N. Lowe.

March 1st

1917.

SPRAYS OF WESTERN PINE

By G. N. LOWE

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By G. N. LOWE
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CALIFORNIA

This little volume is lovingly dedicated to

Memories.

Memories of redwood and manzanita; memories of the dawn on far-flung summits; memories of the mountains of magic robed in the silver splendor of a summer moon.

Of Californian hillsides resplendent with the poppy's cloth of gold.

Of mountain meadows, exulting rivers, and chanting waterfalls.

Of kindly faces that were brightened by the camp-fire's ruddy glow.

Of loving hearts that were—of loving hearts that are—in the cities by the Golden Gate.

G. N. Lowe.

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SPRAYS OF WESTERN PINE

INVITATION

I bid you not on tongues of larks to dine,
Nor hearts of nightingales. Lucullan fare
Is not upon my board; and golden-ware
Is marked but by its absence. Still, the wine
I trust may please your palate. It is mine—
Pressed from the grapes I gathered in the rare
September days. Yes, yes, 'tis homely fare
You'll find within my cot beneath the pine.

Yet still I trust when your repast is made,
You may have found refreshment, and the way
You journey may to you have brighter grown.
Come, rest a while beneath the pinetree's shade,
And should the spread give pleasure, then, I say,
Your pleasure will be mingled with mine own.

EVENING IN YOSEMITE

With sunset fires the sky still glows.
The great peaks blush with rosy light,
And vanish slowly as the night
Steals over the eternal snows.

Where the deep purple shadows fall,
Yosemite's pale column gleams;
The South Dome's evening altar beams;
The tears of Time stain every wall.

A cedar holds a sheltering arm
Above the camp-fire's dancing light;
While wafting upward through the night
Comes Vernal's everlasting psalm.

Spring witnessed here but yestermorn
The nuptials of the sun and snow;
In gold and white they met, and lo!
The lilies of the vale were born.

Down where the crystal rivers gleam,
The night hath spread her sable folds;
The day's last dying splendor holds
On heights where winter reigns supreme.

The mountain sky of holy blue
Grows splendid with familiar stars;
The great moon sends her silver bars
To pierce the gray crags through and through.

In reverence the tall pines stand,
The glacial river laughs and sings,
And solitude, with dusky wings,
Broods over all the mountain land.

O mountains, lend to me your peace!
Still shall your domes in beauty soar,
When I may worship here no more—
When labor, love, and life shall cease.

Serene on God's wide garment hem—
A great contentment fills my breast
As under your pure light I rest—
O stars that beamed on Bethlehem!

MEMORIES

Fair Fancy waves her magic wand—
In the winter fire I see
The glories of thy cliffs and falls—
Yosemite.

Stands there thy Captain, strong and grand,
Guarding thy western gate;
Po-ho-no waves her gauzy scarf
Where rainbows wait.

There lift the grey Cathedral Spires
Dwarfing all works of man;
No chimes profane, there are no choirs
But pipes of Pan.

Colossal, calm, full-panoplied—
He keeps his vigil well—
Hoar watcher of the southern lines,
The Sentinel.

On yon grey crag an eagle plays
And circles with his mate,
Where evening's great, high altars burn
Immaculate.

When yon great dome was split in twain,
What Titan lost his crown—
What god fell from his high estate—
What creed went down?

Wooed by the sun, the virgin snow
Yields to his warm embrace;
From far, white peaks the streams begin
Their matchless race.

Nevada—O impetuous youth!
Born of the granite grey;
Hearing his kindred shout below
With them would play.

Vernal, to hide her naked breast,
A diamond drapery flings;
And through the stately centuries
Her anthem sings.

Betimes it all but overwhelms,
The city's sordid fret;
Yet memory's glance sees now and then
Illilouette.

Kind as the eyes of Jesus there
Heaven's arching splendor smiles,
Where Merced's liquid lyrics run
Through Happy Isles.

And over all the imperial sun
Traileth his mantle's gold;
Till evening weaves a velvet fringe
For every fold.

When lips would praise thee, lips are dumb.
There is no pen to write;
No brush yet made may paint thy face—
Goodnight—goodnight.

THE PRAISE OF MICHAEL ANGELO

A sculptor in old Venice long ago
In marble shaped a statue, so divine
In concept, that he said, "This work of mine
Shall win the praise of Michael Angelo."
The master came, and, searchingly and slow,
His keen eyes marked each curvature and line,
The god-like pose, the draperies traced so fine,
"It lacks one thing," he murmured soft and low.

Years passed, and then the gentle, soothing hand
Of death was laid upon that sculptor's brow;
But ere he passed he called unto his bed
Great Angelo, and from the borderland
Said, "Tell, I pray, what lacks my statue now?"
"It lacks the gift of speech," the master said.

VERNAL GORGE

(A Memory)

Amber dawn, and skies of splendor,
Vagrant winds with tales so tender,
And a lifting of the soul to where the great white
mountains be;
Cascades leap from heights appalling,
And I hear them calling, calling—
O, faithless in the city's streets thou comest not to
me!

HOMEWARD BOUND

I sail across conflicting seas,
  Dark, fog-girt, and profound;
Hope leadeth me and bears me on,
  And I am homeward bound.

The night is long, and drear, and dark,
  And darker seas arise;
But on the tempest's wrathful breath
  My home-bound pennant flies.

I know not when the mist may lift
  Its grey wings from the sea;
Somewhere before I know there lies
  Safe anchorage for me.

I know not when on even keel
  Shall ride my storm-tossed bark;
Sometime I know the call, "All's well"—
  Will echo through the dark.

Sometime upon mine ears shall fall
  The welcome cry of "Land!"
And on my worn and wave-washed deck
  My Pilot soon will stand.

Sometime these veiling mists will fade,
  And then across the foam—
Across the troubled, breaking bar,
  Will gleam the lights of home.

And He, who knows the sea I sail,
  Will take me by the hand;
And smiling on my battered ship
  Will lead me safe to land.

THE QUEST

Dear Heart, I lately passed beneath the pines—
The stately pines—the pines that sigh and sing.
I climbed great mountains where the west winds
bring
Faint odors from the vale of wheat and vines,
In search of peace.
I stood where solemn lines
Of great Sierras rise; and torrents fling
Mad music to the crags where cedars cling,
Above old Ophir's wealth of yellow mines;
But could not see her face.
And then I stood
Where Merced, boasting of its awful leap
Down the great cliffs of lone Yosemite—
Eager to join old Joaquin's tawny flood—
Sang, as it passed me by a bouldered steep:—
Beyond the Hills of Time she waits for thee.

HANDS

Tiny hands, baby hands,
Snowflakes on the counterpane,
Kissed and cradled, kissed again;
Pretty, dimpled, baby hands.

Brown hands, roguish hands,
Full of mischief all the while;
Full of mischief, free from guile,
O Boy, O Boy, with brown hands!

White hands, maiden's hands
Clasp the fingers masculine;
Clasp, and cling, and intertwine,
O snowy hands and brown hands!

Strong hands, willing hands,
Eager now to carve a name
On the granite wall of fame—
O, how changed the baby hands!

Tired hands, trembling hands,
Hands that weary of the fray;
Hands that wait the close of day—
Feeble, calloused, wrinkled hands.

Pale hands, quiet hands,
Folded on a placid breast;
After labor cometh rest—
Rest for all the weary hands.

Kind hands, widow's hands,
Roses on a coffin laid,
Nature's law must be obeyed—
Cover them, poor, worn-out hands.

BESIDE AN OPEN GRAVE

Once more, from out the void, the soothing hand
  Hath reached to point how fleet is human breath;
We mortals dream, but do not understand
  The great, eternal round of life and death.

Is death the door to everlasting life—
  The night of earth the dawn of regal day—
The tomb's embrace the end of care and strife?
  No soul returns, no mortal lips may say.

No mortal eyes have seen the Living God—
  The Shepherd kind who careth for his sheep—
But often falls the unrelenting rod;
  And always children wail and widows weep.

The Power that holds each planet in its course,
  And sends the tender shoot up through the mould,
The Wondrous Fact—the Universal Force
  That finite minds can neither grasp nor hold—

This great, unchanging and mysterious Power,
  Is deaf to raving curse or fervent prayer—
What lies beyond earth's brief, tumultuous hour?
  I do not know—I do not even care.

These man-made creeds that filled with bloody strife
  The flying years, and stirred up hate and wrong—
These are but boulders in the stream of life
  Which pauses, then resistless sweeps along.

I cannot stay the honest doubts that now
  Sweep o'er my soul in ever-swelling tide;
But I would see the blood-drops on His brow,
  And touch, with pitying hand, His wounded side.

Beyond the centuries' slowly brightening skies—
  When pagan myths and Christian tales be past—
Truth, winged with light, triumphant shall arise;
  And lead mankind up to the Day at last.

I will not mourn. The friend who died today
  Hath trod the path my footsteps soon must trace.
What though my tears moved not his features grey?
  I saw the calm contentment on his face.

I will not weep. He would not have it so,
  For he so often sought to make me smile;
But I will gird my loins and onward go,
  And bear my burden yet a little while.

I do not fear. Why should I fear this death?
  'Tis but a link in the eternal chain—
A pause—perchance to gain a stronger breath—
  To rise in some new shape and toil again.

I will not shrink. I did not shrink when life
  Came unto me with all its care and pain;
Nor will I shrink when death shall end the strife,
  And touch with sleep my weary eyes again.

When to its close shall draw my earthly span—
  When toward the western rim descends my sun—
Then would I owe no gold to any man,
  And I would leave no duty here undone.

Yet though I grope and do not understand,
  Though in the dark I dwell—unknowing—blind—
Athwart my soul comes almost in command:—
  Unto thy fellow-man thou may'st be kind.

YOSEMITE

Mine eyes have seen the splendors of the temple of the king,
I saw the milk-white banners from the mighty transepts fling;
I saw the weary pilgrims walk, in reverence, the aisles,
Forgetting all the dusty trails, and all the mountain miles.

O valley of sublimity! soul-weary, worn and spent,
I found amid thy holy isles full measure of content.
I love thy domes and crags where clouds, in many a rolling fleece,
Their benedictions shed on me and lend to me their peace.

Drugged by the balsam of thy pines, lulled by thy chanting falls,
Waked to a dawn of blue and gold by lilting madrigals—
Yea! even I would sound thy praise, though but a human clod—
Thou epic writ in granite by the Master-Author—God!

And thou, O mighty buttress, O thou stern El Capitan!
With rugged scarp and battlement untouched by puny man;
Thou standest in thy grandeur as the ages roll along—
Fit emblem of Eternity, colossal, calm, and strong.

Farewell, farewell, O matchless Vale, farewell, ye granite walls!
Where they who came to conquer rest content to be thy thralls;
And thou, O stream of mercy, on thine angel errand bent,
I drink once more thine elixir, depart in peace, content.

BY THE WESTERN GATE

Now, chastened by the mighty mother, Earth,
Core of my heart! Thou sittest by the gate,
Bereft and mourning; woeful, desolate—
Rent by the pains that presage grander birth.
Where Joy once laughed now waileth Grief, and
Dearth
Sits on thy knees, O Queen, dethroned, distrait—
Yet still the many-cargoed galleons wait
Thy swinging portals, and thy coming mirth.
Be not afraid, Queen of the Sunset Seas!
Thy loins be fruitful, and thy sons be strong.
Though cosmic fingers grip thy radiant face,
Thou feeder of the nations; every breeze
Is redolent of roses. Sing thy song,
And build a braver home and market-place.

—April 18, 1906.

TWO PICTURES

I stood upon a mountain slope
And looked to the west away;
And I saw an artist painting
Where the sunset colors play;
A strange and beautiful picture,
And it filled my soul with awe;
And made me think of peace more pure
Than a mortal ever saw.

And a little, timid streamlet,
Scant of flood was creeping by;
As though it feared to mar the rest
Of the poppies sleeping nigh;
While a brown, belated song-bird
Passed me, scolding, to its nest;
And the mountain slopes grew darker,
As the sun sank in the west.

"Paint me the face of an angel,"
I cried to the artist then;
And it seemed a flood of glory
From the skies swept down the glen.
Then, behold! a noble picture
Was shown to my wondering eyes—
The face of my sainted mother,
And she dwells in Paradise.

Then the valley donned night's shadows,
Though the peak was still aglow;
And the ships came slowly sailing
Where the waters ebb and flow;
And the moon rose o'er the mountain,
While the winds blew wild and free;
And the great picture sank beneath
The rim of the western sea.

"Paint me the face of a sinner,"
And a darker shadow swept
Adown the mountain's rugged slopes,
And I thought the artist wept.
Then, alas! another picture
On the crimson sky was shown—
The sad, pale face of a sinner,
And I knew it for my own.

* * * * *

The great peak donned the shadows then,
And the streamlet sobbed with me,
While the vision slowly sank beneath
The rim of the western sea.

LIFE

To me the gift of Life is passing fair.
At dawn She greets me, amber in her hair,
And dew, like gems, upon her garments. Life,
Who would not labor having thee to wife!

And She hath borne me children. Joy, for one,
Lightens my toil from dawn till day is done;
And Peace lies down with me when night hath spread
Her star-splashed curtain o'er my restful bed.
And Plenty waits upon my humble board,
Day after day, with little left to hoard,
Or mildew, rust, or bring forth later strife;
Thrice blest am I with such a spouse as Life.

And She hath blest me with the gift of sight,
So these are mine: The snow-clad mountain height,
The ocean's flowing purple, and the sheen
Of lilies on the mountain meadows green.
The flash of crystal where the cascade springs,
The touch of pearl upon a sea-gull's wings,
The gems that lie half hidden in the rose,
The fleeting crimson of Sierran snows,
The light that shines in one loved comrade's eyes—
Than these no greater gifts hath Paradise.

And She hath given other gifts to me—
Beauty I hear as well as beauty see,
So these are mine: The earth's great harmonies,
Vespers of birds, the anthem of the seas;
The pipes of Pan in every ribboned dell;
The organ that the pinetrees play so well.
The twittering of the swallows 'neath the eaves,
And rustling of the painted autumn leaves.

The drowsy hum of golden-mantled bees,
And whispered secrets of the morning breeze.
Music of little voices by the door—
Patter of tiny footsteps on the floor—
Lowing of kine by moss-grown pasture bars—
Are greater joys than these beyond the stars?

Ah, Life hath given many gifts to me!
So these are mine: The touch upon my knee
Of baby fingers, hands that clasp my own
In love and friendship. Incense I have known
Of mignonette and myrtle, and the rose,
And scent of every lovely flower that grows.
I shared with singing birds the joys of dawn,
And drank from streams that in the snows were born.
Dear Life, I loved thee well with every breath,
And thou hast bred in me no fear of death!

COME, LET US AWAY

I dream of a camp in the mountains,
A fire that burned ruddy and bright,
    A river that sang
    As downward it sprang,
And a firmament flooded with light—
With the mellow moon's radiant light.

O, the heart grows tired of the city,
And the strident whirl of its ways,
    The toil and the strife,
    The wear of its life,
And the unending care of its days—
O, the sordid, dull round of its days!

Come, let us away to the mountains,
Where torrents rush down to the sea,
    Where meadows are green,
    And tall cedars lean
To the kiss of the wind blowing free—
To the wind blowing gentle and free.

Come, let us away to the valley,
Where crags lift up splendid and high,
    The breath of the pine
    Stirs the blood like wine,
And the heart knoweth never a sigh—
Where the heart hath no time for a sigh.

Come, let us away to the river,
Where it gallops adown the glen,
    The current is strong,
    The rollicking song,
Brings the morning of life back again—
Brings the dew-sprinkled morning again.

Away from the voice of the city,
And the raucous note in its tones,
    The clash of the wheel,
    The clanging of steel,
And the stumbling feet on the stones—
O, the poor, weary feet on the stones!

O, Night, and the wind-shaken cedars!
O, Sleep, calm and dreamless, at last!
    O, Death! shall my quest
    Find the long-sought rest,
When the day and the journey be past—
When my life and its labor be past?

SHASTA

Alone in all his majesty he stands,
Cowled with grey mist, cloaked with wind-tortured
pines,
And counts the growing wealth of wheat and vines
Filling the hollows of his mighty hands.
Hail, hoary sentry of the sunset lands!
From thy great peak we view the gleaming lines
Of snow-crowned summits, on the far confines
Of thy broad foot-stool, fringed with golden strands.
But more than all we feel the softening balm
Of thy vast solitudes, the peace, the rest
That finds a place upon thy high-flung sod;
Thy morning's glory, and thy evening's calm,
Beget a great forgiveness in the breast—
Thy storm-scarred shoulders lift the soul to God.

ON LEAVING YOSEMITE

Here, on the rim, where clustered hemlocks lean,
I pause for one last look upon thy walls;
I hear the mighty music of thy falls
Proclaiming to the world that thou art Queen.

What Titans fought where now smile meadows green?
What gods waged warfare in thy granite halls?
Who were the victors—who became the thralls?
What awful sum of ages hast thou seen?

O, let me gaze again, Yosemite!
A yearning and a sadness fill my soul.
I see thy stream of mercy onward roll,
And hear the chanting of its threnody.

So Adam and his mate, with shaded eyes,
Turned one last, yearning look on Paradise.

A BROKEN TROTH

I stand where great Sierras rise
Robed in supernal white,
And see the years pass like a dream
Dreamed in the hush of night.
I see a miner's lonely grave
And, cut deep in the pine,
Is, "Rob McLeod, passed in his checks,
November, fifty-nine."

Where Mono's mighty mountains lift their everlasting snows;
Where down a dim, unfathomed gorge, a stripling river flows;
Where, to the wandering west wind, the cedar and the pine,
Still tell, with nodding forelocks, the tales of "Forty Nine,"
Still tell, with many whisperings, the tales of bygone years
When, through the slumbering canyons, came the rugged pioneers;
Came, and with pick and cradle, the centuries' silence broke,
And she, the Queen that slept so long, great California woke.

'Twas there one summer morning that a wanderer's footsteps led,
Where the young, snow-born river leaped adown its rocky bed,
And oak and manzanita crooned a song from canyon walls,

Commingling with the anthems of the mighty waterfalls.
A stone's throw from the river there stood four giant pines—
They stood four-square, and held within their rugged, close confines
Four walls of rough-hewn cedar logs—a cabin rude and bare—
And many years had come and gone since footsteps echoed there.
And many snows had fallen on the old and moss-grown roof
Since that deep glen had answered to a voice, or ringing hoof,
And many cities reared their walls on California's plains—
All silent when the pioneers first bled her yellow veins—
And many wild and reckless souls had found eternal peace
Beneath the red madronos where they sought the golden fleece.

The wanderer paused and rested while he gazed around the glen,
And hearkened to the river's chant, the cascade's deep amen,
Then slowly to the ancient hut he bent his wayworn feet,
And passed into its cool repose from out the noonday heat.
A little lizard ran across the old decaying floor
To where a squirrel, wise and grey, had piled his winter store;
And on the rough logs of the walls a dim and ghostly row

Of garments hung, cut in the style of forty years ago.
An ancient pick beneath a cot, a mattock by the door
Long fallen from its rusty hinge, and on the creaking floor
A pile of old newspapers lay—a thrifty wood-rat's lair—
The "Press" of good old Glasgow town, the "Sentinel" of Ayr,
And San Francisco's "Chronicle" with news of bygone days—
The wanderer bore them where the light might aid his eager gaze—
And scanning closely, one by one, there fell beneath his view
A yellow letter, creased and torn, and dated "Sixty-two."
With trembling hands he opened it, with reverence and awe
Began to read the ancient screed, and this is what he saw:

"Dear Rob," the letter ran, "'Tis long since we have heard from you,
Long since the good ship sailed away across the waters blue;
Long since you broke the silver coin beneath our trysting tree—
One half you know you kept yourself, the other gave to me—
And night by night my weary heart lies dreaming of the past,
And day by day I fondly say, 'He'll come to me at last!'

The throstle's nest is in the bush beside our cottage door,
The hedge is full of roses, lad, as in the days of yore;
And Rover listens for your step while far away you roam,
And I—I scarcely see to write—O, Rob, dear lad, come home.
Maxwelton's braes are bonny still where falls the early dew,
And all we lack to fill joy's cup is you, dear heart, is you.
Come home from that far distant land beyond the western sea,
Come home to Annie Laurie who in Scotia waits for thee."

O pioneer of olden time with iron heart and limb,
Who journeyed, ever westward, when the trails were new and dim!
O men who stormed the frowning heights, and trod the virgin snows,
And planted vine and fig-tree where the manzanita grows!
Who built a mighty city by the tide-ripped Golden Gate,
And sculptured from a lonely land a great and sovereign state.
O hopes and castles that were built in days of forty-nine!
Forgotten graves, and unsung dead, beneath the grieving pine,

What grey-haired mothers watched in vain beside
an old-world door—
What Annie Lauries waited for the lads that came
no more!

The great tears dimmed the wanderer's eyes and, as
he pondered there,
A breath of Scottish heather seemed to fill the cabin
bare;
The cascade in the canyon hushed its thunderous
amen;
And strains of "Annie Laurie" seemed to float adown
the glen.
And thus he mused as slowly he passed up the boul-
dered steep—
All joy to living pioneers, and peace to them that
sleep!

A FAMILIAR FACE

The grey-beard spake: "Lo! Change has touched the years,
And filled yon quiet city of the dead.
In peace I soon shall rest my weary head,
And, empty handed, leave these toils and fears.
None know me now, so seamed with time and tears;
Yet, though familiar faces long have sped,
Hope gleameth through the lattice by my bed—
And Nature's face my world-worn spirit cheers.

Majestic Mother! Ever in thy prime.
Though earth grow old and weary in her flight,
Still gleam thy suns beyond great Algol's clime;
Still; through the dark, burns Vega's beacon light.
And changeless, to the eyes of fleeting time,
Orion swings his belt athwart the night.

AS I WOULD MEET HIM

Not in a blood-red mist of sweat and pain
Would I meet Death. Not after I had lain
On torture's couch. Not in dread earthquake shock.
I would not meet him jesting, nor with mock
And frippery of words. And not in fear
Of greater sorrows there than bowed me here.

I would not look on Death as on a thief,
But, passive as a falling autumn leaf,
Would hail him as a friend from out the deep,
Who brought to me the priceless boon of sleep.
Glad as a toiler who, his work well done,
Sees in the west the slow-descending sun.
Fearing no God whose vengeance, dire and deep,
Would turn to hell Death's calm and dreamless sleep.
But glad as he who, grown aweary, sees
The home light shining through the orchard trees.

I would meet Death ere yet from me has fled
The strength of arm to win my daily bread;
Before mine eyes grow dim, my pulses slow,
Before the winter winds begin to blow.
Before I bow beneath the weight of years,
While holding still the hope that lifts and cheers
That, in the purple distances I see,
Great peaks will hold a realm of peace for me.

I would meet Death ere yet from me have gone
The faces that I love to look upon.
Before the ring is broken where I see
Dear eyes that look so trustingly to me.
Dear lips from where so blithsomely there fell
The old-time songs that I have loved so well.

And dear, white hands, whose mission is to bless—
So kind, so deft, so fitted to caress—
Thus, by a ring of loving faces blest,
I would meet Death and take his gift of rest.

I would meet Death on some grand mountain height,
Where snow-clad peaks and forests met my sight.
Where full-mouthed falls their anthems lifted high,
Where winds might kiss me as they passed me by.
Where, far and high, above the cares of men,
Mine eyes might feast, my feet find rest again.
Where blue-eyed flowers looked upward from the sod,
I'd kneel and kiss the wide-flung robes of God.
Where snows might drift and gently cover o'er
The empty house which once my spirit bore.
Where brave old pines their lulling vigils keep,
I'd draw my mantle round me and would sleep.

EL CAPITAN

When wearied with the sins of man,
God rests on old El Capitan.
And gazing on the cliffs He made—
The cataracts—the sylvan glade—
The glories of each ribboned glen—
Forgiveness falls from Him again.

THE FIRST RAIN

There is music in the canyon,
There is gladness there today;
Such a laughing and a prattling
From the little baby stream;
The great, majestic mountains
Don their cowls of sober grey;
And the Great Mother moves in sleep,
With promise in her dream.
  Hand in hand, and dancing,
  Come the glad waters, glancing
Where fickle shafts of sunlight
Through the Spanish mosses gleam.

There is music in the canyon,
On the laurel's glossy leaves
The rain comes pitter-patter
With a gentle, lulling sound;
And old Nature's busy shuttle
A varied pattern weaves,
Where little runlets wander
O'er the thirsty, sun-baked ground.
  A little wind sweeps over
  With a subtle scent of clover,
And a hint of little secrets
That were in its journey found.

There is music in the wheatland
Where the autumn stubble lies;
And laughter where the little stream
Its greater kinsman joins;
Such joy and jubilation
In the bounty from the skies.

Which cools the breast of brown old earth
And laves her dusty groins.
  And she thrills with passion's fire,
  And she throbs with great desire,
To release the life renascent
In the deepness of her loins.

Ah! the music in the canyon
Finds in yearning hearts today
An echo in the symphonies
That deep and dormant lie;
For the sky which seemeth grieving,
The mountains mourning grey,
Are the segments of the promise
Of a harvest by-and-by.
  Like the prisoned life in earth
  Shall my soul renew its birth,
Rise to Love and Youth immortal
Though Death croons a lullaby?

LE-CONTE

(Died in Yosemite)

A deeper shadow fell athwart the day.
The pulsing wire a message flashed, we knew
His gentle voice had ceased—that from our view
The bowed yet stately form had passed away.

Great mountains donned their cowls of mourning grey.
Vast redwoods moaned a dirge to troubled streams.
A noble soul had left a world of dreams.
Earth's sombre dusk gave place to glorious day.

Grand—as the cliffs thy white soul loved so well.
Kind—as the south wind to the velvet sod.
Pure—as the snows that feed the mountain dell—
Le-Conte, thy soul hath gone direct to God.

Yet, though thou walk'st in perfect day with Him,
The light thou kindled here shall never dim.

SIERRA NEVADA

They watch and guard the sleeping dells
  Where ice-born torrents flow;
A myriad granite sentinels
  Helmed and cuirassed with snow.

Crowned with a thousand years of drift,
  Domed by a sapphire sky,
Magnificent Sierras lift
  Where earth-weaned eagles fly.

A million more fantastic frets
  Than artist ever drew—
Great battlements and minarets,
  Etched on the matchless blue.

How pure the light on yonder peaks
  Immaculate and white,
Where morning's blush in crimson breaks
  Close on the skirts of night!

Yon glacial torrent's deep, hoarse lute,
  Its upward music flings;
The great, eternal crags stand mute,
  And listen while it sings.

O mighty range! Thy wounds and scars
  Thy weird, bewildering forms,
Attest thine everlasting wars—
  Thy heritage of storms.

And still what peace! Serenity
  On crag and deep abyss—
O, may such calmness fall on me
  When Azrael stoops to kiss.

* * * * *

How like this rugged mountain trail
The path we trace through life;
The stony steep, the sheltered vale,
The storm, the stress, the strife.

The fickle weather, foul and fair,
Fierce heat and cooling shade;
Mistaken turnings here and there,
Bright vistas swift to fade.

O Life, a morning, noon, and night,
Caressing wind and rain,
A little time to toil and fight—
A heritage of pain!

We know not where thy paths began,
We know not where they lead,
Each guiding chart was shaped by man
To serve his craft or need.

No pillared cloud by day, no flame
By night, no beacon high—
O God! If Thou would'st write Thy name
In gold upon the sky!

Yet though so rugged be the way,
Soon must the journey end;
Soon down the western slope of day,
The red sun will descend.

Though keen, cold winds may storm and sting,
The trail be rough and steep,
I know, ere long, the night will bring
Her benison of sleep.

DAWN

(On a Western Mountain)

The far horizon's eastern rim is paling,
And one by one night's jewels disappear;
Down in the west a pallid moon is sailing,
And rosy shafts announce that dawn is near.

Cold was the sleep, disturbed by fitful dreaming,
Rude was the couch by yonder lichened stones;
The night is past, the day comes kindly beaming,
Her fragrant breath the rudest couch atones.

I stand on high with amber skies communing,
Kissed by the soft, unsullied lips of light;
The notes of birds my conscious soul attuning—
Their songs like prayers waft through the ether bright.

The plain is like a book beneath me lying,
In smiling grace with unclasped pages spread;
And wraiths of soft encrimsoned clouds are flying,
Athwart the matchless glory o'er my head.

The day-god walks in all his regal splendor;
The sky hath donned its purple and its gold;
Unfettered winds in whispers low and tender,
Tell me again the tales so often told.

A great, grey eagle overhead is winging,
In airy spaces finding room to play;
On mightier wings my ransomed soul is springing
To grander heights in regions far away.

Welcome the day. Welcome the brighter morrow!
Welcome the light when night's dim shades be past!
When, soul to soul, each heeds his brother's sorrow,
And man shall love his fellow-man at last.

AN IDYL

Brilliantly the little brooklet
Sparkled in the sun,
And laughingly its liquid music played;
Merrily the idle foam-bells
Danced, and gaily spun;
Coquetting with the bending ferns
That graced the quiet glade.
Thy blushing smile of joy and hope
And innocent affection,
Seemed fairer then than any sun
That decked earth's canopy;
And thy sweet words that fell so coy
And proved my soul's delection,
Like music fell from thy red lips
And came to answer me.

THE BOY

O little babe, in tiny cot,
  Glad visions gild thy sleep!
May happiness be e'er thy lot,
  God's angels thy soul keep!
The fleeting smile upon thy lips
  Find place forever there,
I kiss thy rosy finger tips—
  God bless my babe so fair!

Back from my toil when day is done,
  And lo! the babe is gone;
A sturdy lad the evening sun
  Now kindly beams upon.
'Tis still my babe, though changed in form,
  He holds my heart strings yet—
Lord, shield my boy in care and storm,
  And guide him through life's fret.

Swift roll the seasons o'er my head,
  The years are gliding past;
The boy is gone, and in his stead,
  A man hath come at last.
A man who kindly smiles on me,
  And tells me, ah! too true:
I am not what I used to be,
  The years have changed me, too.

O Matron, on whose once bright hair
  December's snow falls fast,
The tree thou reared in love and care
  Now shadeth us at last.
'Tis still our boy, he ever stands
  To us, indeed, a friend—
Son, lend us now thy strong, kind hands,
  And lead us to the end.

"IF A MAN DIE . . . ?"

When Death shall come with wings of night,
  When trembling hands tire of the fray,
Is there, beyond earth's toil and fight,
  A fairer Bourne—a Regal Day?

O suns that swim in cosmic seas!
  Why should we live—why must we die?
We ask, through all the centuries,
  The questions of the Whence and Why.

O mourning winds that sweep the sea!
  And yearning voice that haunts the shore,
Shall, through the ages yet to be,
  The Questions stand—forevermore?

For this great Lock is there no Key?
  Humanity expectant waits
Through all the vast Eternity;
  And knocks at unresponsive gates.

O ye, our cosmic comrades! Stars
  Give back one sign—your lamps are lit—
And nearer neighbor, valiant Mars—
  Hast thou no message to transmit?

The mind of Humboldt, and the mind
  Of Shakespeare, and of Socrates,
Pass these to dust, with Homer blind
  Who sang immortal symphonies?

Pass these to dust, or pass they where
  In distances unmeasured swing
Vast, unknown suns, that flame and flare,
  And great worlds from their girdles fling?

Pass these great souls to nothingness,
  Or, freed from earth's cold prison bars,
Pass they to other worlds to bless,
  And swell the music of the stars?

Pass these through the infinity
  Of space though cosmic oceans rage,
To worlds we know not—worlds to be—
  A never-ending pilgrimage?

Silent the stars. They do not heed.
  No sound we hear, no signal see.
No flashing sign that we may read
  In all the stern immensity.

Man's heaven of his desire is born:—
  An end to labor, lasting rest.
He dreams of skies where every dawn
  Smiles on fair islands of the blest—

Of valleys slaked by living wells,
  By sun, and dew, and south wind kissed;
And pleasant plains of asphodels,
  Washed in pale gold and amethyst.

And from the mists of primal morn
  Conceptions rise in varied hue;
And who shall praise, and who shall scorn,
  Or say which is the false and true?

When thou shalt bid the world farewell,
  Though quivering lips cold lips may kiss,
Though streaming eyes of grief may tell,
  Hope's gaze, ascendant, looks to this:

On Everlasting Heights the Goal,
  The City on the mountain's brow—
A perfect knowledge of the Whole,
  Of which we see a segment now.

* * * * *

No signal from the stellar sea.
  The yearning voice that haunts the shore
Still chants the ancient threnody—
  A ceaseless, deep, "Forevermore."

A RING

I hold a ring within my hand,
With yellow gold a-gleaming;
And jewels grace the circle fair,
To aid me in my scheming;
Flashing in the bright moonlight
Like dew-drops on a flower;
Or stars that gem the arch of night;
Or fireflies in a bower.

I know a maiden, shy and sweet,
Who watches for me nightly;
With dancing eyes like summer skies
That welcome me so brightly.
I'll place these jewels on her hand—
My memory on her lingers—
Sapphires for the veins of blue;
And pearls to match white fingers.

A lady she of high repute,
And gentle ways and learning;
She loves me more as days pass o'er,
By reason of my yearning;
And glad was I when first she deigned
To hearken to my pleading;
And sad was I when she passed by,
My awkward self unheeding.

But now the music of her voice,
The largess of her kindness
Is mine, with all her wealth of love,
To aught else I am mindless.
And this bright ring shall beauty gain
While near my love it lingers—
Sapphires for the veins of blue,
And pearls to match white fingers.

FAITH

A mixture, She, of ignorance and fears;
Believing though She neither sees nor hears;
One grain, methinks, of undiluted truth,
Out-weigheth all the faith of all the years.

ASTRONOMY

Great Antidote for ignorance and fears!
We look to thee to lead us to the day,
Before thy light the darkness melts away,
Thy ceaseless labor Life's great pathway clears.
The shackles fall as pass the stately years,
Thy gaze uplifts, lo! Vega's distant day
Comes, captive, where thy mystic colors play—
The sombre gloom of ages disappears.

What though the thrones of false gods shake and fall?
Though useless, hoary, man-made creeds may fade?
Calm reason knows no sorrow, reck, or ruth.
Thy touch, Boon Science, liberates the thrall,
Thy broadening beam illumes the unknown shade,
Patient, thy finger pointeth to the truth.

COMMEMORATION DAY

Sleep, soldiers, sleep! the flag ye loved is streaming
In peace above your couches 'neath the pines;
No bugle notes may rouse ye from your dreaming,
No swift alarm disturb the faithful lines.

Sleep, sailors, sleep! the untamed ocean surges
Above your lone and unmarked place of rest;
And chants her solemn, never-ending dirges,
While unappeased still heaves her ancient breast.

Rest, patriots, rest! the cypress trees are keeping
A lonely vigil over your last camp,
Where soft-shod night across the swamp is creeping,
Holding on high the moon's inconstant lamp.

Peace, North and South! your heroes' dust is blending
Where, clad in panoply of war, they fell.
The years a kind forgetfulness are lending
To hearts where once raged fires of hate and hell.

We read the page Time's finger is revealing
As Memory's torch illumes the volumed years;
And to the chords of mournful music stealing,
The mountain of their sacrifice appears.

The wounds are healed that once were raw and bleeding,
The bitterness hath vanished with the past,
And we await the hour toward us speeding
When Death shall kindly sound the taps at last.

The mills of fate pursue their ceaseless grinding—
Still at the shrine of hate the legions die—
We know no human cords, however binding,
That war's keen blade hath severed not the tie.

Yet still this hope the yearning soul rejoices:
That war and its dread consequences cease,
And, through the gloom, apocalpytic voices
Announce the dawning of eternal peace.

* * * * *

God of that faithful pilgrim few
Who, in the tempest of their tears
And blood, built greater than they knew—
In the far mists of other years.

When smarting 'neath a tyrant's rod,
And bruised beneath oppression's yoke,
Still, trusting Thee, their ancient God,
The bondage that they bore they broke.

And when, with passions loosed, at length
The house they built was rent in twain,
Then, then, O God! Thou wer't our strength,
And succored these thy sons again.

Till o'er the weary, war-worn land
The sun of liberty blazed forth—
An undivided house we stand,
From east to west, from south to north.

At fearful price. We heed it well—
The reeking heaps of brave men slain—
The flaming hate of shot and shell—
The belching fires of Shiloh's plain.

The grey-haired mothers died, and wept
The children for their absent sires—
Fanned by the breath of wrath there leapt
The flames from sacrificial fires.

The homesteads ruined and decayed,
  Rank weeds displaced the waving corn,
Columbia—stricken and dismayed—
  Wept and bewailed her fair first-born.

Today the placid legions sleep
  On rugged height or smiling plain,
Or where the thundering surges sweep
  And chant the requiem of the slain.

Or where the solemn, hoary pines
  Whisper to them of later birth:
The dust of them that fell affines
  Beneath us with our mother earth.

Or where within the dread stockade,
  Far from the battle's lurid hell,
Untouched by hissing ball or blade—
  Fair Freedom's price they paid full well.

Today in unity we stand,
  All mute the once relentless guns,
And face to face, and hand in hand,
  Each mourns her sister's fallen sons.

No more for them war's wild alarm,
  No more for them the thunder's dread,
Naught may disturb the holy calm
  And requiescence of the dead.

O God, we know, the years have taught
  For what our grandsires paid the price;
What with their blood our fathers bought,
  What meant their great self-sacrifice.

Far through the mist of years they gazed,
  Far through the season's snows and heat,
When in the wilderness they blazed
  A path to guide their children's feet.

Perchance they won a peace we lack,
  Perchance the riddle of our fate
Is solved in Death's lone bivouac—
  We do not know. We can but wait.

God of the patriot! by Thy hand,
  And working of Thy mighty will,
Our trembling walls were made to stand—
  Thy patience with Thy people still!

God of the pilgrim! dense and grey
  The mists of doubt rise like a sea
Around our race; renew we pray
  Our great, dead fathers' faith in Thee!

God of the ages! hear us, hear—
  We know none other gods but Thou—
Grant that in place of sword and spear
  We shape the pruning-hook and plow.

Great Spirit, lead us to the day!
  And this, O God, we pray Thee for:
Show unto us some wiser way
  Than brutal arguments of war.

Grant Thou that wisdom's broadening ray
  To us some brighter plan may teach—
Lo! all our wrath of yesterday
  Is but a grain upon the beach.

Gone the red hate of yesterday,
And here, where earthly passions cease,
We by each lowly headstone lay
The flowers that stand for love and peace.

As down the years the lessons ring
That war's grim tutelage hath taught,
Grant from the loins of earth may spring
A race to scale the heights of thought.

Father, we thank Thee for that hour
When, unto them that serfdom bent,
The great Emancipator's power
To lift the groaning millions went.

We thank Thee, too, when in that time
That fratricidal hands stretched forth
To murder right, to stay the crime
Uprose the patriotic North.

A new day dawned, the darkness fled
When they poor Afric's shackles broke—
Grant other Lincolns yet be bred
To free us from our moral yoke.

As freedom sprang from out the roar
And awfulness of war's red might—
O God, grant to us more and more—
Enfranchise us with love and light.

A liberty of soul we ask,
That we may rise a ransomed throng,
Each to his well-belovéd task,
His labors lightened by his song.

May we our worldly systems scan,
And purge our laws of every ill,
Iniquities within our plan
In thralldom hold the millions still.

Swift were our sires when duty bade,
And shall our sacrifice be less?
In script that shall not dim nor fade,
They wrote their great unselfishness.

Full-panoplied the hordes of greed
Gigantic battlements have reared
Within our gates; and we concede
Where our great fathers would have dared.

Yet other slavery have we,
And brigandage approved by law,
To Pharaohs still we bend the knee,
And fashion bricks without the straw.

These hold the fat from Goshen's fields,
These hold our liberties in pledge,
This parasitic brood that wields
The lash of special privilege.

And Mammon grins, his muzzles hold
The patient threshers of the corn;
And galling chains of guilty gold
Oppress our children yet unborn.

And Justice wrings her fettered hands,
With perjury her temple reeks,
While ravished Honor trembling stands,
Pollution on her flaming cheeks.

Truth hides her nakedness in shame,
And smites her violated lips;
Too feebly burns her altar's flame,
Soiled are her shapely finger-tips.

Nay! but for gold men's souls suborn,
And laws are framed in secret guilt—
Still, pass us not, O God, with scorn—
Still hold the temple we have built!

Give freedom in our halls of state
From bickerings and party strife—
Purge us of jealousy and hate—
The hate that spoils a brother's life.

When passions blind and tempests rise,
And falsehood's wrongs assault the right,
Let wisdom's torch illume our skies—
We want the truth—we need the light.

Grant we be ready to extend
A kindly hand to the distressed,
To raise them when their shoulders bend,
To bless our brothers and be blessed.

So that upon our temple's wall
No awful, mystic hand may trace
Dread signs that shall portend the fall
And dissolution of our race.

When Death with kindly touch and cold
Returns us to our mother earth,
Breathe on our dust, O God, and mold
A race enfranchised from its birth.

An undivided house have we—
  Let Love's white banners float unfurled—
From shore to shore, from sea to sea,
  Give man an undivided world.

* * * * *

Lo! the fulfillment of the dream
  Draws nearer with our nightly fires;
And through the morning's purple gleam
  The mountains of our souls' desires.

—May 30, 1900.

ARCADY

O magic film of Memory!
What pictures now are screened for me.
I see again the cloud-capped hills,
And hear once more the laughing rills,
With loving, misty gaze, I see
The mountains of my Arcady.

The voices of my Arcady
With sweet insistence come to me.
'Tis there forgiveness fills the breast,
'Tis there the weary soul finds rest,
If body might with spirit be
My fires should burn in Arcady.

Though winter's robe with snowy hem,
Hides Shasta's lofty diadem,
Below his grey crags, bleak and cold,
The poppy weaves her cloth of gold—
O shining peak, and wind so free,
Would I might fare to Arcady!

To listen when, untrammeled, blow
The winds from everlasting snow.
To watch the evening shadows creep
From mountain mead to summit steep.
To know the dawn's deep alchemy,
And meet my soul in Arcady.

There, through the tapestry of pines,
I see the mountain's stately lines;
The jeweled meadows, gold and green,
Hemmed by the river's silver sheen.
A forest choir makes melody,
And all is fair in Arcady.

Sometime, O dawn wind blowing free,
My soul shall, too, unfettered be;
And then, amid the asphodels,
Where only calm contentment dwells,
The waiting ones will welcome me
To the lotus land of Arcady.

Sometime, O wind that wanders free,
Thy secrets may be known to me;
Exulting stream, born of the snow,
Thy mystic murmurs I may know—
When Death shall, with his master-key,
Swing wide the gates of Arcady.

SUNSET LAND

Fair land of redwood, pine and palm,
With skies serene and bland;
Enchantress of the Sunset Seas—
Belovéd Western Land—
Would I might shape my lips to song
And tell in chords that ring
How I love thee! But naught have I
Save the desire to sing.

(A kindly, generous-hearted Queen—
How beautiful she stands!
Eschscholtzias deck her full, round breast,
And palm leaves fill her hands.
But words are scant, and lips oft fail
To speak, though pulses thrill
With warm desire. Yet would I sing—
Though I have naught but will.)

Thus would I sing: A pilgrimage
Through canyon, vale and wood,
To where in royal purple clad
A kingly mountain stood—
A temple, reared for thought and prayer,
In Nature's own device;
An altar, lifting to the skies,
For bloodless sacrifice.

A place to find a lenitive
For pain of soul and wrong;
A place to breathe, a place to strike
The subtle notes of song;

A place where rills of melody
Pour from the canyons dim;
And from the bending orchard trees
The meadow-larks's brief hymn.

A place to watch the eagle's flight
Athwart the matchless sky;
A place where golden poppies grew
And bowed as we passed by;
A place to feel the wine of life
Course through the veins like fire;
Where feeble wishes swell and grow
Into a great desire.

Not all who made the pilgrimage
Can gather now to cheer;
Not all who climbed the mountain then
Can come with kiss or tear;
For some have scaled a Greater Peak,
From us have taken flight;
Still, led by Memory's magic hand,
All, all come back tonight.

With Memory's eyes we see them now,
We clasp each kindly hand,
And once again we wander through
The vales of Sunset Land.
And once again we linger as
We lingered long ago,
Where in the shadows cool and deep,
The manzanitas grow.

We see the dancing sunbeams play
Where droning pinetrees fling
Their shadows on the rocky walls
Where weird madronos cling;

And clad in garb of living green,
  Clasped to the breast of earth,
Behold the pregnant vine that bears
  The germ of song and mirth.

And lo! a greater glory still—
  Of strength the nation's source—
Unfolding like a scroll illumed,
  The world's most potent force;
League after league a golden sea
  The gladdened eye doth greet—
From margin unto margin waves
  The wheat, the wheat, the wheat!

O favored land—O Sunset Land!
  With milk and honey blest,
What wealth is thine of corn and wine,
  Thou Goddess of the West!
My head upon thy kindly lap,
  My couch beneath thy trees,
I weigh against the city's fret
  The joy of hours like these.

On Joaquin's panoramic plain
  A wondrous glamour lies,
Like the warm, love-engendered light,
  Deep in a sweetheart's eyes.
The swelling anthems of the pines
  Like benedictions fall—
Great organ chords that bind and hold
  The soul in tender thrall.

Lo, in the east, piled range on range,
  The great Sierras rise;
Lifting on high their hoary heads,
  Communing with the skies;

And, gazing on the great white peaks,
  Their solemn calm and rest,
What yearnings, strange, and sad, and deep,
  Disturb the conscious breast.

We yearn, perchance, for one clear call
  When, at the signal—Cease—
The body is redeemed from pain,
  The soul wins lasting peace;
Or with dark shadows of regret
  And grief the heart is stirred,
To know the picture we have limned
  Is out of line and blurred.

O careless choice of fading tints
  That make Life's colors run,
And foolish quest of gold or gaud
  To cast away when won!
Of what avail that man to place,
  To fame, or gold should bend?
Six feet by three, and six feet deep,
  Content him in the end.

Ah! take thy paints and canvas where
  The cool winds kiss the sod,
In Nature's grand cathedral aisles
  So full of peace and God;
And, faithful to thy sacred trust,
  Until Life's tale is told,
Paint its great picture clear and true,
  In colors that shall hold.

Paint in warm lights, clear, bold and grand,
  The great hope that is born
In the bright gold of sunset skies—
  The promise of the dawn.

Paint out the false and crooked lines
  Without regret or rue—
Paint out the dark and narrow creeds—
  Paint in the broad and true.

Take courage, thou of fainting heart,
  Crouched in thy narrow cell,
And purge thyself of ancient dread—
  The dread of death and hell;
Look up and lift thy voice in song,
  When sombre doubt draws near—
There is no hell but memory;
  There is no death but fear.

And though some say:—The past is dead
  With all it takes and gives—
Be sure that when the day is done
  'Tis all at last that lives;
And in thy last, lone bivouac—
  The camp that thou shalt keep—
Thy heaven shall be what thou hast made—
  Thy sowing thou shalt reap.

Enchantress of the West, farewell!
  Soft-sandaled night descends—
Her star-bejeweled, velvet robe,
  With day's bright raiment blends;
And bay, and beach, and headland bold
  Fade in the waning light;
Fair goddess of the Sunset Sea,
  Loved Westernland, goodnight!

WAR

Blind as to what they fight each other for,
To rouse the workers to a mood for war
Their leaders shout revenge. Old feuds are stirred,
And wounds, long-healed, are opened with a word.
War-lords, to gain in history half a page,
Half of a world in bloody strife engage.

A burst of martial music on the air,
Sad women hoeing in the fields with bare
And bleeding feet. The fathers, brothers, sons,
All gone to feed mad rulers' hungry guns—
A lord of war rides on an armored train,
A heap of dead lies rotting in the rain.

A silken banner on the breeze is borne,
And little children weep, and widows mourn.
The kindly earth has lost her generous yield,
Her yellow grain lies rotting in the field.
Boasts of great prowess in the years gone by—
A starving baby's weak and wailing cry.

O Power that rules the universe! bend down
And purge Thine earth of sceptre and of crown.
Of them that claim to rule by right divine—
Descendants of a predatory line—
O Power, bend down, and from Thy bounty give
A tithe of wisdom that Thy people live!

O Peace, descend from thy calm mountain height,
From thy great pines, and from thy snow-fields white,

From flower-strewn groves where feathered choristers
With thine own songs freight every breeze that stirs,
And scatter wide, with thy benignant hands,
Thy virtues over all the war-torn lands!

O People—ye on whom the burden falls—
Emblazon now upon your memory's walls
The names of them who, careless of the blame,
Flung forth the brand that set a world aflame.
From sea to farther sea, from shore to shore,
The bitter shame be on them evermore!

—August 5, 1914.

A BOY AND A GIRL

THE GIRL

I sat beside your window
And I looked far out to sea;
Far, far beyond the Golden Gate,
Where white-winged galleons be;
Beyond the flaming sunset
Where the swift tides come and go,
And thundering surges break and fall
In emerald and snow.

I framed a wish that on you twain
The gods might ever smile;
That Fortune—fickle though she be—
Be with you all the while;
That your page in Life's great volume
Be written clear and true—
From a full heart's overflowing
I framed the wish for you.

THE BOY

May Youth—O Life's bright blossom time!—
Make not his years too brief,
May summer's skies be all undimmed
By lowering clouds of grief.
May Memory's pictures all be fair,
No tempest round you roar,
And only peace and goodness come
And pass the open door.

But should the storm clouds gather,
And should thorns the pathway strew,
Remember—She—the woman's share
Of burden bears with you.

And may the little love-god,
With the sunshine on his brow,
Make you, through all the future years,
Just sweethearts then as now.

When the sun in Life's calm evening
The lengthening shadow flings,
May all past days be beautiful
As pearls on silver strings.
And when, in that calm sunset,
All the years pass in review,
Think kindly of the vanished hand
That penned the wish for you.

UNANSWERED

The dying generation lay
  Stretched on his father's bed;
He called to him his only son,
  And to the stripling said:

"My son, these many years I strove
  To smooth Life's rugged way;
To you I pass my burden now—
  Be careful, lad, I pray!

My shoulders now are bent and old,
  But thine be young and strong;
So do thy best, dear boy of mine,
  While singing Life's great song.

Curb all thy baser passions, boy,
  Be upright, brave, and true;
And glad remembrances thy mind
  In age shall bring to you.

Life hath abundance now to fill
  Her ever hungry maw;
But in the dusty years of old
  Some emptiness she saw.

The problem of enough she learned
  With aid by Science lent;
But one great riddle thou must read—
  A just apportionment.

I have no time to tell in words
  Such things as thou should'st know;
But wisdom garnered by my sires
  The written records show.

Dear lad, my strength is waning fast—"
He smiled—a weary smile—
"Just draw my mantle round my head,
And let me sleep a while."

"But father," cried the boy, "Pray tell
Life's ultimate—the Goal—
Thy body I will wash and hide,
Where goeth now thy soul?"

Too late! the pale old lips were still;
In vain the stripling cried—
The old, grey generation stretched
His weary limbs and died.

WHERE FRIENDS KEEP WATCH

When I shall close mine eyes for final sleeping,
And all of earth is past,
When Azrael, with his mighty wings, comes sweeping,
And beckons me at last—

Then would I know the country of my yearning—
Where friends keep watch for me—
And I would see the kindly campfires burning
Beneath some forest tree.

Unsatisfied by Christian myths and stories,
When my earth journey ends,
My soul would find, amid the mountain glories,
The meeting place of friends.

And when, beneath the Morning's shining lances,
I pass into that land,
Who shall be first to come, with loving glances,
And take me by the hand?

Shall it be thou, O saintly-souled young mother,
Set free at last from care—
Shall it be thou, O restless, roving brother,
With whom I learned a prayer?

Shall it be thou, old friend, whose locks were hoary,
Whom I have sorely missed—
To welcome me amid the mountain's glory
Of gold and amethyst?

All shall be there amid that mountain splendor,
When I shall cease to roam;
And all will come with glances, loving, tender,
To bid me welcome home.

Unwearied in that mountain land we'll wander,
Or, by the campfire's glow,
We'll watch great peaks that seem to stand and ponder,
Robed in eternal snow.

In some green vale deep in the mountain's glory,
Lulled by the singing streams,
We'll start anew the interrupted story,
And tell again our dreams.

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